

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed May 18, 2007 (hereinafter "Office Action"), rejected Claims 1-7, 13, 22, 24, and 25 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,397,199, issued to Goodwin, III et al. (hereinafter "Goodwin et al."). Claims 8-12 and 14-21 were rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Goodwin et al. in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US2002/0173996, to Murch et al. (hereinafter "Murch et al."). The Office Action asserts that Claims 26-39, 41-80, and 82-88 are rejected using similar rationales as those for Claims 1-7, 13, 22, 24, and 25. This response amends Claims 1, 26, 42-44, 72, and 82. Claims 2-22, 24, 25, 27-39, 41, 45-64, 66-71, 73-80, and 83-88 are as previously presented. It should be noted that the Office Action includes Claims 23, 40, 65, 81, and 89 as rejected under the cited references. However, these claims were canceled in the previous amendment and remain canceled. Therefore, Claims 23, 40, 65, 81, and 89 are not discussed herein. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

Prior to discussing in detail why applicants believe that all of the claims in this application are allowable over the cited and applied references, brief summaries of the disclosed subject matter and of the cited and applied references are provided. The following discussions of the disclosed subject matter and the cited and applied references are not provided to define the scope or interpretation of any of the claims. Instead, the discussions are provided to help the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office better appreciate important claim distinctions discussed hereafter.

Summary of the Disclosed Subject Matter

The disclosed subject matter is related to a method and system for processing available inventory item queries and inventory action requests corresponding to inventory information stored by three levels of detail. Each level within the hierarchy includes data corresponding to various aspects of an inventory item managed by a travel server.

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The first level of detail utilized to describe an inventory item defined by inventory information is a group record, the group record describing the broadest characteristic data associated with an inventory item. In one embodiment described by the application, group record information may include date-based information for a hotel, such as general service fees, limitations of use, and the like. The second level of detail describing an inventory item is a record. Each record is associated with a group record, and defines more specific data related to an inventory item, in some instances including dates. Each record may correspond to an item category such as types of rooms within a hotel, i.e., double rooms, king-size rooms, and penthouse suites. The inventory information includes an inventory record defining a third level of detail corresponding to the above referenced record or at least two referenced records. The third level of detail includes information corresponding to an instance of the record identified in the second level of detail. Each inventory record would include data describing specific characteristics of the inventory item, namely, a hotel room(s) for sale. The information can include the cost of the room from the supplier, the price of the room charged to the consumer, and limitations of use. Thus, the disclosed subject matter provides the ability to store and manage inventory item queries and inventory action requests for a variety of inventory items according to a three-level hierarchy.

Summary of Goodwin et al.

Goodwin et al. is directed to a system and a method of altering transaction terms by examining inventory levels and changing transaction terms that differ when compared against predetermined threshold levels. According to Goodwin et al., the management software in the system compares the current inventory level of a given item against a threshold level of that same item. If the current inventory level of that item is within the threshold range, then the management software continues examining the other inventory levels. If, however, the current inventory level is outside of the threshold range, the transaction management software changes or updates the database to reflect the new inventory level of the current item under examination.

If the inventory level is changed, a message will also be sent to display the new price (or transaction term) on a screen or other display in the computer system.

Although Goodwin et al. discloses an inventory management system, Goodwin et al. lacks the three-level hierarchy, the at least two referenced groups, and records defining a seconded level, wherein some records are further defined by dates, of the claimed subject matter.

Summary of Murch et al.

Murch et al. is directed to a system and method that enables a customer to search travel inventory databases over the Internet and receive results on their screen. If there are no results that match the customer's search request, the query can be changed by the customer and a new search executed. Murch et al. allows inventory managers to participate in an online booking environment while not having to maintain full-time connections with any inventory servers.

As with Goodwin et al., however, Murch et al. lacks the three-level hierarchy, the at least two referenced groups, and records defining a seconded level, wherein some records are further defined by dates, of the claimed subject matter.

Rejection of Claims 1-7, 13, 22, 24, and 25 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Over Goodwin et al.

As indicated above, Claims 1-7, 13, 22, 24, and 25 were rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Goodwin et al. Applicants disagree for the reasons set forth below.

Claims 1 and 72

As noted above, Goodwin et al. is directed to a system and a method of alerting transaction terms by examining inventory levels and changing transaction terms that differ when compared against predetermined threshold levels. Applicants respectfully submit that Goodwin et al. explicitly fails to teach or suggest a three-level hierarchy as recited in independent Claims 1 and 72. Goodwin et al. also lacks the third level of detail in the hierarchy that corresponds to instances of inventory items that are referenced to "at least two of the set of item category records." In contrast, Goodwin et al. is directed toward an inventory management system that

does not include multiple instance data that are based on a second level of data. As taught in Goodwin et al., each piece of inventory corresponds to its own entry to allow for the management of the threshold levels.

Generally described, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), a *prima facie* case of obviousness can be established only if the cited references, alone or in combination, teach each and every element recited in the claim. *In re Bell*, 991 F.2d 781 (Fed. Cir. 1993). For the above reasons, the cited and applied references fail to teach or suggest all of the claimed elements for Claims 1 and 72. Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 72 are allowable and request that the rejection of Claims 1 and 72 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 26 and 82

Similar to Claims 1 and 72, Goodwin et al. fails to disclose all of the elements of Claims 26 and 82. Further, the Office Action asserts that Claim 82 is rejected under the same rationale as that corresponding to Claims 1-7, 13, 22, 24, and 25. Applicants respectfully disagree that Claim 82 can be rejected using similar rationales as those corresponding to Claims 1-7, 13, 22, 24, and 25.

Regarding Claims 26 and 82, Goodwin et al. lacks "a set of item category components operable to define a second level of detail that is associated to a referenced group component and corresponds to types of inventory items for the referenced group, wherein the second level of detail includes date information associated with the inventory items." Regarding Claim 82, Goodwin et al. further lacks the additional "travel server" element. As discussed above, Goodwin et al. is directed toward an inventory management system that facilitates the replenishment of inventory levels by monitoring inventory threshold level. Accordingly, Goodwin et al. does not disclose a travel server for managing travel related inventory as recited in Claim 82. Additionally, Goodwin et al. fails to disclose "a set of item category components operable to define a second level of detail that is associated to a referenced group component and corresponds to types of inventory items for the referenced group, wherein the second level of

detail includes date information associated with the inventory items." An inventory management system, as taught by Goodwin et al., would not have any need to manage the threshold levels by date. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that Claims 26 and 82 are allowable and request that the rejection of Claims 26 and 82 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claim 44

Using similar arguments as in Claims 1, 26, and 72, Claim 44 is distinguishable over Goodwin et al. Specifically, Claim 44 includes both the claimed subject matter of "a set of item category components operable to define a second level of detail that is associated to a referenced group component and corresponds to types of inventory items for the referenced group, wherein the second level of detail includes date information associated with the inventory items" as in Claims 26 and 82, and also discloses "instances of inventory item types referenced by at least two of the set of item category components," as in Claims 1 and 72. Therefore, for the same reasons previously stated with regard to Claims 1, 26, 72, and 82, applicants respectfully submit that Claim 44 is allowable and request that the rejection of Claim 44 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Claims 2-22, 27-39, 41-43, 45-64, 66-71, 73-80, and 83-88 depend directly or indirectly from independent Claims 1, 26, 44, 72, and 82, respectively. Each of the dependent claims include the limitations of the amended independent claims. Accordingly, for at least the reasons recited above with regard to the independent claims, it is submitted that Claims 2-22, 27-39, 41-43, 45-64, 66-71, 73-80, and 83-88 are also allowable. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejection of Claims 2-22, 27-39, 41-43, 45-64, 66-71, 73-80, and 83-88 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 8-12 and 14-21 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Over Goodwin et al. in Further view of Murch et al.

As indicated above, Claims 8-12 and 14-21 were rejected as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Goodwin et al. in further view of Murch et al. The Office Action asserts

that Murch et al. discloses various claimed subject matter as described in the dependent claims. For instance, the Office Action asserts Murch et al. describes using dates as a price adjustment on a current date or date of use, as in Claim 8. Applicants respectfully disagree. Murch et al. discloses using dates to narrow a search of inventory items. (Murch et al., paragraph 54.) However, the claimed subject matter differs by using dates as date-based price adjustments, that is, adjusting the price based on the date. Murch et al. only narrows inventory search results based on dates and does not teach the use of dates capable of adjusting price. Further, Murch et al. fails to disclose any of the deficiencies of Goodwin et al. Applicants respectfully submit that Goodwin et al. in view of Murch et al., in combination or alone, fails to read on the dependent claims as well. Therefore, applicants submit that Claims 8-12 and 14-21 are allowable and request that the rejection of Claims 8-12 and 14-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing amendment and response is submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action mailed May 18, 2007. If the Examiner believes that there are any issues that can be resolved by a telephone conference, or that there are any informalities that can be corrected by an Examiner's amendment, please feel free to call applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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